



PRESS RELEASE

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Andrea Mayr: the multi talented runner targets her ultimate destination, the Vienna City Marathon

Spotlight on the Austrian marathon debutant: from the Steeplechase to mountains and up the Empire State Building to the Marathon

There could hardly be a more complete elite runner than her: Andrea Mayr ran middle and long distances on the track, she is the national record holder in the Steeple Chase, she did cross country races, she is Austria's fastest half marathon runner ever, one of the strongest mountain runners worldwide and on top of that she is the holder of the course record of the Empire States Building run-up in New York. Now the 29 year-old goes for the one obvious challenge left: the marathon. On 19th April Andrea Mayr will run the Vienna City Marathon, competing in a unique debutants only race.

Vienna City Marathon: a great event at her doorstep

"A year ago I would never have imagined that I would run a marathon this April," says Andrea Mayr, who had too much respect of the heavy training loads in the built-up to a marathon. "But meanwhile this has changed and it actually appeals to me." Grown-up in Linz she moved to Vienna to study medicine. She finished her studies in 2004 and continued living in the city. With the Vienna City Marathon more or less at her doorstep she has watched the event as a spectator at the roadside in the past, enjoying the great atmosphere. "I am really looking forward to this race because people will cheer me on in my hometown. It will be something special." Andrea Mayr does not care much about her rivals and about possible chances concerning places. "I will not study my opponents beforehand. I simply want to run a good time and a fine debut marathon." Also she does not want to give predictions regarding times since the marathon will be something new for her.

Olympic disappointment provided new kick

Originally Andrea Mayr had planned to end her career in August 2008 – after running the steeple chase at the Olympic Games. But she never made it to Beijing. The Austrian record holder in the steeple (9:47.61 minutes) missed the qualifying time by 1.61 seconds and was not picked for the team. "Then I thought that this would not really be a suitable end to my career, having missed the Olympics and running nowhere again. So I decided to add some mountain races." Andrea Mayr then won the World Road Running Trophy for the second time after 2006. "But even after winning this one I did not want to retire. That was when I thought I should go for the Vienna City Marathon. In December I started training for the marathon and from January onwards I trained very seriously for Vienna."

Mountain runner by coincidence

Already as a child Andrea Mayr was a good runner. Her parents had taken her with them when they went mountain climbing. And when they took her to children's races she was always winning. "It was great fun and I never was doing any training." She continued winning cross country races at primary school, but it was gymnastics that was her first sport at that time. "But then I became too

tall for gymnastics and finally stopped it at the age of 15. I had done well at regional level, but there would have been no way of competing internationally.” After that she started training and first was a middle distance runner. Later she ran the steeple chase, where she qualified for the World Championships in 2005 and 2007. On both occasions she did not make the final.

Big win at Obudu Ranch Race in Nigeria

When she was about 20 she had entered her first mountain race. “It was a coincidence, because the regional championships took place in Linz. So I thought I should just go and run since Linz is my hometown. But I finished so far down the field that I felt really embarrassed. I thought I should do much better. So I came back to the same race one year later and won – though it was no championship race this time,” Andrea Mayr recalls. That was the start of her successful mountain running career, during which she also won the famous ‘Obudu Ranch’ race in Nigeria. Here she beat a number of prominent African athletes in autumn 2008. “That was a great success, because often people had said: you are only winning in the mountains because the African runners are not competing. But this time I had beaten a number of them.”

It was this year, when Andrea Mayr improved the Austrian half marathon record to 1:12:14. Back in 2006 she had another remarkable success at yet another discipline: The Austrian took the Empire State Building run-up in New York. She covered the 1,576 steps (102 floors) in 11:23 minutes. This course record still stands today.

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More information about the Vienna City Marathon: www.vienna-marathon.com

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